

A photograph of a building facade. At the top, a large blue sign with white text reads "CURRENCY EXCHANGE". Below the sign is a curved wall made of light-colored stone or concrete blocks. A classic globe lamp with a white globe and a blue base is mounted on the wall. To the right of the lamp, several security cameras are mounted on the wall. In the foreground, there are lush green plants, possibly ferns or palms.

CURRENCY  
EXCHANGE

*E.V. Shelov-Kovedyayev*

# THE PARADOXES OF GLOBALISATION AND RUSSIA

## TWO PROJECTS

Trite opinions about poverty and inferiority complexes and cultural<sup>1</sup> or religious conflict do not reveal the causes of the intensity and essence of the key processes on the international scene. We are facing a new round of competition between the western and eastern global political and cultural projects, rich in previously unseen resources.<sup>2</sup>

A candid look at the history of humanity will convince us that the *eastern vector of globalisation is primary* in relation to its western counterpart. Even the minor princes of Ancient Mesopotamia called themselves rulers of the four corners of the world and laid claim to world domination. This claim was not a mark of civilisation in any way. Nothing like this is seen among the Greeks during their independent period or in Rome during the first centuries of its history. And then in the East there is the Chinese model, which recognised only the Celestial Empire's right to rule the world and considered the whole world, including those countries which did not yet realise it,<sup>3</sup> to be its provinces.

**The eastern global political project** is a particularly ideological phenomenon and, with rare and brief exceptions, always unsuccessful. Even China, after its consolidation into the Han system, always tended towards collapse: for thousands of years it was prey to foreign conquerors. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the same function was fulfilled by the socialist idea borrowed from the West and shared by both the communists and the Kuomintang.

**The western global political project**, on the other hand, stems from practical intentions and in general is almost always successful.

Here it is important to stress that contrary to common misconceptions Byzantium, as the Eastern *Roman* Empire, was a continuation of the western (European) global political project. Of course, it too had ideological underpinning for its practical steps. But the difference lies in the fact that *unlike the East, where ideology sets the*

*tone, here it serves as the justification for the already established possession of resources.*

To be precise, the conclusion of the first stage of the global western political project with the fall of Constantinople effectively coincided with the prologue of its second stage, known as colonialism. This was followed in turn, and with no pauses, by neo-colonialism, economic and political transnationalisation, and now the phenomenon known as globalisation. It is thus not only a succession but also a continuous process. To be sure, the western empires also fell. But the political model that united them remained stable, transforming itself and adapting every time to the new conditions.

Yet in the sphere of culture the eastern global project, on the contrary, is always successful. Its achievements invariably penetrate to the very heart of the West. That is why it is so puzzling that the Americans are surprised to find that globalisation is a two-way street. Their lack of a broad liberal education prevents them from adequately perceiving the real world in the variety of its cultural wealth. The western cultural project, meanwhile, is plainly a failure. Even in science and technology it is now in disorderly retreat. And its spiritual influence is evaporating following the Europeans' loss of direct political control of various territories: only in the Philippines are 90% of believers Christians, while in the rest of Asia they are an absolute minority.

The internally contradictory state of both projects is deeply traumatising for both sides. They are trying to achieve total success for their globalism in everything. Some try to use their cultural models to achieve political superiority, while others drag political diktat in their wake. For example, Islamic terrorists and their ideologues share the conviction (although it is false) that they are resisting the West not as a system of values but as absolute evil — godless and soulless, with no clear-cut cultural or moral principles — which is bent on destroying their own civilization.

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<sup>1</sup> With the exception of Israel, where the contrast lies between the urban/money-based form of civilisation and the rural form, where the main valuables are land and water.

<sup>2</sup> This concerns the primary characteristics of the western and eastern cultural models.

<sup>3</sup> Such a frank response by the Chinese emperor to the British monarch George III so struck Arnold Toynbee that even the Russian digest of his works was littered with references to it.

## A FATAL PIROUETTE

The first modern paradox is that the western global political project, as seen in the USA's foreign policy strategy, seems to us to have effectively turned into the eastern one, which cannot be successful. The complete collapse of Euro-Atlanticism, which will inevitably follow the failure of the economy, is so critical for general stability that it must definitely be prevented.

Until recently, America was developing strictly within the framework of the pragmatic model. With great reluctance it violated its policy of isolationism towards the end of the First World War. Having secured its own interests in the outcome of the war, it was happy to turn back in on itself. It was no less determined in postponing its direct action in the Second World War. At the end of the war it remained on the continent purely for the sake of its economic advantages. For the same reason its ideological backing for the "Cold War" should not be considered a departure from its traditional line, since the propaganda campaign in the adversary's camp falls fully in line with it. "Desert Storm" was also consistent with this traditional line.

Between 1945 and 1991 the USA quietly took control of the key hubs in the global movement of transport, energy, finance and information. It became the leader and backbone of the global economic and political system, a genuinely global empire, as a result of a series of practical steps rather than overblown ambitions. In doing so, it provided a very vivid illustration of the western political project.

And suddenly, at the start of the new century its actions became strongly ideologised. Its disregard for the unwillingness of traditional societies to accept new ideas and institutions allows no other assessment. Not without reason has Obama begun to talk about the need to temper the Americans' zeal to export their culture.

Despite all the anti-crisis measures, domestic consumption, the foundation of the US economy, is declining. Long before the current shocks, the country had almost turned into a net importer of high technologies. The trade deficit is growing, and with it dependence on foreign partners, above all China. Alan Greenspan's warning that a very likely further fall of 5% in the mortgage market will have disastrous consequences

for the American economy is sharply at variance with the upbeat assertions from official sources that the recession has ended. Francis Fukuyama and analysts at the RAND Corporation and the Heritage Foundation are noting the growth of disorganisation, atomisation and isolation trends in social processes. With the availability of what is usually a consolidating military factor, some states have already adopted declarations of sovereignty, and others are reflecting on their example. Leaders in research ratings such as Steven Cohen and Anthony Slayton<sup>1</sup> are forecasting the break-up of the States in 2012–2013, which given the psychological suggestibility of the Americans could have the most awful consequences.

The feverish excitement in relation to Iraq, Iran, Syria, North Korea and the Middle East, all at the same time, the hope for a break-up scenario in Russia and the underestimation of the possibility of the EU growing stronger demonstrate that the USA has for the first time set the imperious export of its understanding of freedom, democracy, human rights, the limits of sovereignty, etc., i.e. pure ideology, above pragmatism. Even the partial easing of its stance with regard to Cuba, the UN and a number of foreign politicians does not change the picture.

This is by no means the first instance of pathological disease in the western model. The Crusades (not without reason did Bush Jnr. make a Freudian slip at the start of his actions against Saddam), the participants in which did not shrink from robbing their Orthodox fellow believers, the Inquisition, the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, the Messianism of the first socialists and their attempts to create new rationalistic religions and churches, Marx's communism and Bolshevism, fascism and National Socialism, which crudely crushed the spiritual strength and positive dynamics of many nations, were aberrations (fortunately not backed up with enough resources) of European theology, philosophy and sociology.

Pax Americana, by acquiring a self-sufficient logic of development, is fully capable of falling in on itself. After all, global empires that are left without competition do not survive for long. America has not learnt the lessons of the past, and the mechanism of self-destruction that is built into the eastern political project has already

begun to work against it. The post-war economic and political order has already been largely undermined. The USA has lost its ability to control world prices. The creeping breakdown of the anti-terrorist coalition, the understandable limitations on army reserves to wage other major campaigns, and the State Department's unpreparedness for many events in Latin America, the CIS and other parts of the world are warnings of the real possibility of a fiasco.

The barbs that are particularly painful to American vanity from the USA's allies and satellites in Central and Eastern Europe, which correctly assessed the symptoms of the USSR's death throes ahead of many others, are an indication of how shaky the USA's position has become. The search for mainly technical solutions to put off or prevent a worsening of affairs is only increasing the negative trends. Unfortunately, the USA does not want to admit that its ambition to reduce the number of buttresses of the western project to just one is precisely what is making it completely unstable and is turning its self-elimination into an impending reality.

In spite of our differences in opinion, this option does not correspond with the interests of our country, which I shall touch upon again later. In order to avoid it, what we need is original conceptual approaches, not the worn out stereotypes of our own and foreign analysts, who do not take into account the fact that after the "easternisation" of America's global policy the USA's fight against Islamic extremism is turning, although neither of its participants understand it, into an intraspecific regime, which is strengthening its mutual brutality and is radically increasing the risk of the West's destruction by an enemy or its self-destruction.

### THE ASIA TRAP

What we have said causes us to take a closer look at the Chinese version of the global political project. China's traditional political ideology is two-pronged. It not only postulates that it has a mandate from Heaven to rule the world, but also, thanks to Confucianism, it builds its policy on extreme pragmatism, which permits Sinologists to call the Celestial Empire the Rome of the East. Thanks to this practicality, the separatism

and civilisation landslide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did not cause a collapse of the state system there, but instead led to the transition to Deng's pragmatism. Like Japanese Messianism in 1945, ideology was relegated to the area of strictly domestic consumption.

Thus we see formed the **second paradox** of modern times: the Chinese political project has become an essentially western one, in that a *declaration* of the right to world domination has been *replaced by practical steps* to make this a reality. The Chinese have a worldwide market for consumer goods. Half of the world's electronics market belongs to them. American investments alone, and only in the continental part of the country, exceed 1 trillion dollars. Hundreds of millions of huaqiao [overseas Chinese] and businesses are working in the diaspora for the interests of the mother country. Beijing has *already* de facto taken control of the West using its own resources, because the West is not capable of freeing itself from its own material expenditure and profits. And if we recall that power has to rely on force, then the Chinese army and military industry, including its high-tech aspects, have recently scored striking successes.

Hence the **third paradox**. In so far as the Far Eastern political project has been able to mimic, it has gained the advantage. For the first time a model which is not Eurocentric but which is ideologically eastern and organisationally western may become united (and unifying) and all-embracing. The war between its competitors, Western liberalism and Islamic radicalism, is working in China's interests. By bleeding each other white, they will become easy pickings for China. That is why for the time being China on the outside seems to be haughtily taking almost no interest in their commotion. It's like a monkey watching a fight between two tigers.

There is a reason behind the Chinese Communist Party regime's work to gradually convert Chinese characters into Latin script. It is getting ready in good time to pounce on its victim. After all, the present unified written language was created on the orders of the emperors so that their subjects, who were all ordered to acquire universal literacy, should be able to understand their decrees alike. The Bolsheviks with their compulsory secondary education were feeble imitators of the mandarins. Of course, following the logic

of self-disintegration, the Chinese world is bound to collapse in time, but we'll have to wait a while for that.

### RUSSIA IN THE "EAST-WEST" FRAME OF REFERENCE

Until 1917 Russia was generally developing along the path of the western political project. The creation of the USSR abruptly changed its direction.

The Soviet Union of Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin was to its very end a classic eastern global political project. It made a demand for control of other societies before it possessed the resources required to do this. It lacked even the minimal organisational requirement — unity in the socialist and workers' movement. Even the plan for victory in the country on its own was not sufficiently resourced. For the Bolshevik plotters, bogged down in complexes, everything was replaced by Marx's idea of a worldwide proletarian revolution permeated with archaic eastern Messianism, which in the opinion of Nikolai Berdyayev resonated nicely with the Orthodox consciousness, and which was made many times stronger by the delirium of permanence.

Over thousands of years of confrontation with the eastern political project the West has learnt to spot the appearance of each new version of it and engage in resistance to it at the level of a conditioned reflex. In this sense communism and "socialism" were simply shouting about themselves. For the West, the "Cold War" was an intraspecific struggle, like the battle against Hitlerism. That was the real reason for western hostility, even without the subversive activity of the Comintern and its successors. Europe instinctively understood immediately that Bolshevik Russia had stepped outside the western project and by devoting itself to eastern globalism had become really alien to it. Its rejection was of a cultural and archetypal nature, as Russian Eurasians emphasised.

In the end, Russian consciousness and society, having remained at heart western, tore down the eastern distortion of "socialism". The authorities need to remember that the people,

having emotionally returned to their original civilisation, made their European choice back in August 1991.

Alas, the government did not follow the nation for long, never mind help it to return to a natural path of development. The later Yeltsin and Putin returned to the Soviet habit of setting ideological niceties above the pragmatic interests of the nation, and the West returned to its line of intraspecific conflict.

Actually having great power status is not the issue: rather it's the fact that its validity must be proved beforehand by indisputable practical advantages. Ideologised globalism does not find success. This is what was involved in the collapse before our eyes of the Warsaw Bloc, the USSR<sup>4</sup>, the SFRY and Czechoslovakia. The same fate haunts the CIS, Russia and all the new states that enjoy (quasi) autonomy — Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Azerbaijan. Let me add this: I am not redrawing the picture, but simply filling it in, putting it in the context of stable cultural codes. If Russia, in addition to its spiritual, cultural, social, economic and political woes, remains captive to mirages, the fate of the Soviet Union awaits it. The thousand-year project could be lost within just over 100 years from 1917.

Present-day politicians perhaps do not fully understand that the country will not be saved by a mechanical increase in military might, even if it is an impressive increase. By constantly confusing patriotism with militarism, the authorities are only aggravating the ideologised nature of their policy. We must protect our territorial integrity not for the sake of fine words but in the direct sense for life on earth. A nation, like any organism, is creative while it is growing. When it and its natural habitat begin to collapse, it moves into a dying period. That is a law of nature. These processes should have been stopped as soon as they entered Russia after the First World War.

The Czech Republic and Slovakia are not an example for us. In their case the agrarian part of the country seceded from the industrial part: we experienced that possibility half a century ago. At that time a pragmatic western project was working, and therefore there were rational actions.

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<sup>4</sup> M.S. Gorbachev's historic achievement is that he intuitively made a move towards the West, as a result of which he displayed his well known compliance. If he could have pursued a policy of westernization, the USSR would have had a chance of preserving its unity, together with the Baltic states.

While our homeland exists within the framework of the eastern deviation, the tone is set by irrational emotions, and for that reason any division of it in modern conditions could only be dramatic. It will bury the global balance, and we will become savages in a wretched reservation. This means that we have a responsibility to our country and to humanity not to allow the country to disintegrate. Let us seriously, rationally and with good intentions to everyone *look after ourselves*. This act alone will make things easier for the world.

### CHOOSING A PATH

I believe that a *return* to the western global *political* project would halt the programme of self-destruction which is built into our history of an ideologised paradigm (which has already cost people dear).<sup>5</sup> Moreover, this movement will not demand any self-inflicted violence of Russia. Indeed, even when it fell into the eastern heresy of communism, our homeland — **another paradox** — in practice pursued a westernised modernisation. Such was the policy of industrialisation, the development of Central Asia and the Caucasus, including the current attempts at adaptation in Chechnya, expansion into Afghanistan, Africa, the Arab–Muslim world and so on.

Thus Westernism, in both its good and its bad points, proves to be quite natural for our country. In that case, we should pay closer attention to the two powerful organisations with which the West is now above all associated: NATO and the European Union. The patriotic (and pragmatic) sense of joining both of them is obvious, in that this will guarantee the unity of Russia, and in terms of Europe it creates the conditions for its renaissance as a whole. Moreover, if we want to regain our place as one of the world leaders, we must bear in mind that no one in Eurasia can become a centre of power outside an eastern or western format. The idea of a third way is fruitless. No one, not even the USSR, has ever managed to make this a reality. Since our country is an inseparable part of the West, it is within the

West that we should aim to become an independent centre of influence, linked with the USA and the EU.

This is not to say that joining the EU and NATO would not have its complications and minus points. For example, the western Europeans' refusal to enshrine their cultural identity in a constitutional treaty is counterproductive. On top of that, the former economic prospects for a united Europe, which were already rather gloomy, have been cut back further by the crisis. The European project, for all its grandiose nature, cannot ignore global processes. There are many warning signs here: the widening migratory expansion of the South and the East, the catastrophic birth rate situation, the rising popularity of euthanasia, and the rash of suicides among young people in the richest societies. Truly, if women there are refusing to bear children, the doctors are helping people to die, and the young people are dying, then the men and society as a whole are doing something very wrong.

Joining Russia to the EU will require patient, well structured, painstaking, thoughtful and calm joint work on the modernisation and convergence of standards, institutions and traditions. This includes work on levelling out the vectors and rates of economic growth, and on division and specialisation of the labour market, during which it will be necessary to secure Russian national interests and the rights of our citizens. The abundance of objective mutual obstacles does not mean that this strategic line should be rejected. But since it will take quite some time to eliminate them, we should work out common and correct tactics involving integrated complementary steps, moving forward as chances present themselves, while in parallel making use of other opportunities.

### REFLECTIONS ON NATO'S ADVANTAGES

As for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, it is adapting to its new members and circumstances faster than the European Union. The efforts it has been making for two decades to

<sup>5</sup> Our people (up to 70%) has been living in a state of the most severe stress for a century – wars, revolutions, famines, devastation, repression, the arms race, severe upheavals from the 1930s to the 1990s, crises. That's why it longs for "stagnation", for a period of relative calm.

transform itself into a global security system cannot be fulfilled without the active participation of Russia. Without Russia as a reliable partner, the global structure will lose its stability, which in itself threatens a repartition of the planet in the chaos of which humanity could simply disappear. NATO is feeling a great need for Russian partnership in the depths of Asia, which allows us (without pettiness or false modesty) to defend all the issues which are of fundamental importance to us. Those who seriously oppose this joining together will lapse into a self-destructive eastern barbarity. We don't have very much time to regenerate ourselves or perish, and to waste that time on empty experiments would be criminal. Russia today is not strong enough to close in on itself. We need time to prepare ourselves. In order to gain that time, we need to get involved in the Atlantic structures, because to create our own security system, independently of everyone else, is an almost hopeless cause and would be extremely long and expensive. If we joined the Alliance, we could help it to achieve another very important aim. Since its new composition, scale and reorientation to a North-South line would create an enormous amount of work for it in modernising and strengthening its integrity and manageability, and a mass of routine tasks aimed at mutual adaptation, the western project would again be pragmatized and returned to its natural course. This would also benefit the West because within the organisation we would become a predictable ally.

Moreover, membership of this bloc is important for a whole range of other reasons. First, it unites the countries of both Europe and North America and strengthens them in the face of the increasingly clear eastern strategic threat. Second, joint manoeuvres and operations have proved the reliability of linking the capacities, weapons and professional conformity and interaction of both sides' militaries. Third, Obama and Anders Fogh Rasmussen are sending us perfectly clear signals about their willingness to enter into cooperation with us as deeply as we like, while taking full account of the delicate aspects of our national security interests. Fourth, the experience of France and other members shows that it is possible to pursue your own sovereign position quite successfully from within it. The main thing is to know how to formulate that

position convincingly and to be cooperative. The argument of those who oppose entry into the Alliance on the grounds that the USA imposes its will on it does not seem convincing since its refusal to support Bush in Iraq.

Our home-grown hawks pass off as passivity the spirit of solidarity that the West has nurtured in itself, and the habits it has, deeper than ours, of collective discipline which allow it to quickly work out ad hoc solutions and to effectively take and implement decisions in the common interest, or, if it proves to be too difficult to find agreement on a particular issue, to find an alternative which suits everyone. One doesn't have to look far for an example: on the eve of that same Iraq operation Washington yielded and found other ways of implementing its plans. If we too could learn at least sometimes to subdue our obstinacy and limit our rigidity it would do no harm. If we want to be understood correctly, we have to show that we understand the importance of the qualities we have mentioned and also show that we have the ability to be guided by them.

If we join the Euro-Atlantic community as full-scale members, we will above all be joining the most powerful defensive structure of the northern hemisphere and will acquire additional reliable joint protection. Moreover, we will gain this in all four areas of resistance to potential threats planned up to now by the General Staff at once: in the European and American areas, because NATO does not engage in internal conflicts; in the southern area we will strengthen the alliance against terror; in the eastern area we will together give China arguments for equitable neighbourly relations.

Finally, instead of the risk of wearing ourselves out or getting it wrong (for it is impossible to prepare ourselves successfully for conflict on all four fronts at once), the country will gain: first, freedom of manoeuvre in investment activity in fundamental knowledge and developments, including defence research and development, for which we are responsible within European civilisation, and second, an expansion of cooperation between the Russian military-industrial complex and foreign companies to get access for our technologies into sectors of the arms market which are currently closed to us.

Russia's political class must show extreme pragmatism here, clearly formulate national,

not just bureaucratic, interests, disavow the antiquated propaganda clichés of a hostile West, cease to demonise Euro-Atlanticism and, on the contrary, recognise that by joining the Alliance our motherland would finally be able to optimise fulfilment of several other objectives which we are accustomed to numbering among our traditional powers. Thus the security zone in the northern quarter of the globe would acquire completeness and integrity, bringing together both sides of the Pacific Ocean. It is impossible to overestimate the significance of this result alone for the world.<sup>6</sup>

Also this proposed approach to the problem (not excluding the possibility of a merger with the Collective Security Treaty Organisation) would seriously help us to engage with the role of acting as a unifying force in the post-Soviet space. After all, many of our neighbours are trying to join NATO. Everyone knows that it is easier to implement these plans together. It is of fundamental importance that by joining with the West we would solve all our own problems: we would become a powerful centre of gravity; we would regain the respect and fear of our eastern neighbours; we would gain protection from other potential threats. But in an alliance with the East we would gain only momentary benefits.

### TOWARDS A UNITED EUROPE

The great complexity of our relations with the EU does not mean that their uncertainty should be protracted. On the contrary, bearing in mind the fact that the European Union (although it does not see enough understanding and sensible negotiators in Russian ruling circles) regards the prospect of joining with us as a strategic inevitability, and also taking into account the time necessary to resolve all the issues arising, including the patriotically sensitive problem of Kaliningrad, substantive talks on these issues must not be put off. But since a good start exists here, in the form of four shared spaces, it would be worth starting with expanding these to our greatest possible benefit.

At the same time we must not forget the history, logic and aims of creating a united Europe. From the very beginning Schuman and his successors were addressing a triune objective: to prevent the occurrence of new wars on the continent, to ease the course and consequences of economic crises, and the peaceful use of the atom. In spite of periodic contradictions and digressions, such as the inclination to develop a project *against* the Americans which sometimes surfaces now, it still maintains its deep genetic pragmatism. If we do not want to revive distrust towards Russia, then taking into account all the aforementioned circumstances, we must not allow ourselves to become lost in illusions concerning the depth of disagreements within the Atlantic alliance and still worse try to clumsily play on them, instead of advancing positive programmes.

Moreover, we must exclude artificial restrictions on competition in our market for western companies. After all, it would be much more productive, within the bounds of accepted practice, to make deals for the acquisition of major property by the leading transnational corporations conditional upon reasonable social charges. For example, programmes to improve ecology and the human environment, to develop territory and to modernise business, and to support scientific, educational and technological projects. In the same way, the stimulation of major investments in foreign countries and the export of capital while the demands of its own society are underfinanced strengthens the Europeans' "eastern", irrational and unreliable image of Russia. On the whole, we do not have time for doubts. In order to survive, Russia must radically change the habits that became entrenched during the period of Soviet eclipse. Otherwise the Kremlin simply risks flying past its own window of opportunity. In order to correct the negative trend that is developing in its own logic, its very first practical steps must be aimed at a radical improvement of the investment climate.

These steps must definitely include a procedure for the restitution (including all reasonable charges and restrictions on receiving and using it in its natural form or a means, times and scale of

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<sup>6</sup> The presence or absence of common borders now does not have the significance for the outbreak of conflict that it had a few decades ago.

compensation for it) of property confiscated by the Bolsheviks to sufficient and legal heirs of its former owners. This measure would show more convincingly than many assurances and laws that the authorities in today's Russia seriously respect the rights of private property owners and would hasten the process of the return of capital taken out of the country. It could also accelerate the repatriation of some of the "old Russians" who have been successful abroad and whose present circumstances mean that they have not only their own solid fortunes which could be invested in the country, but also extensive financial and political connections, i.e. significant potential for improving its economic and international position. This in turn would serve as a signal to increase the scale of essentially foreign resources being attracted.

Moreover, if the returning descendants of the first and second waves of émigrés prove to be quite numerous, this would at the same time help to improve the quality and composition of the elite by including in it a responsible and influential segment that thinks nationally (on the scale of the country). No less important is the attitude of the old Russian émigré community to the field of cultural, moral and spiritual development, which is much more respectful than that of new business, and its understanding of the primary significance of universal knowledge and investment in fundamental science, education, medicine and culture as social investments in the infrastructure of life, not as points of pure expenditure but as a source of future growth. The participation of repatriates in the economic life of Russia would also encourage the return of intellectual and cultural figures who have recently left, i.e. the growth of competitive advantages in which we do not have comparable rivals. All this would ensure, instead of the suspicious opposition of the ruined USSR, a place for the country in the European project that is worthy of its unique potential and the prospect of a true convergence of its various components into one non-antagonistic whole.

When with the help of fine economic tuning we undertake an extensive structural manoeuvre into strategic social investments, the West will itself come to us for support. Moreover, this drift has already started. For several years Microsoft has been developing and producing software in

Nizhny Novgorod and Saint Petersburg, exports of which are growing by 25% every year. Boeing has opened its biggest and latest engineering design centre for future models in Moscow. The European Centre for Nuclear Research is ineffective without our scientific know-how. Motorola, Intel and Sun order their new solutions here. The USA has reduced its allocations to science by a third, recognising that the level of competence of our graduates is head and shoulders above theirs. US entrepreneurs are rushing to invest in our "knowledge" sectors. Since theory can live without technologies, it is only necessary to constantly finance its uninterrupted growth. But technologies cannot live without theory.

It seems that we are on the brink of seeing the most important science-rich businesses moving to us. This process should not be slowed down, nor should it be artificially pushed forward. We should recall that at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Russia had already almost become the business Mecca of Europe and the world's most dynamic economy, but it was consumed by the flames of global conflict. Therefore it behoves the country more than anything else to look after itself and optimise its competitive positions. That is, by creating exhaustive conditions for the return of those who have left and for nurturing new brains (understanding that there are not many of them), and thus solving on the way the demographic problem and the issue of retaining our territory with the aid of growth in its population. In this context the topic of a renaissance of the countryside as a place to live and to carry out normal and innovative activity takes on a new resonance.

It is no exaggeration to say that the fate of European civilisation is now in our hands. Even after the massive "brain drain" Russia possesses, with its 11.5% of the planet's land and 2.3% of its population, 24% of humanity's intellectual resources. It has no comparable rivals in universal knowledge: in foreign countries, up to 75% of it is produced by émigrés from the USSR. These niches must be resolutely defended and preserved for us. A broad cultural education and the observance of traditional ethical norms (I would mention only the words of Fukuyama, so topical in this crisis, that morality possesses a powerful capacity to increase wealth) are the main engine of pragmatic development.

What needs to be discussed here is radical reform of the army and its equipment, the stimulation of military and dual-purpose research and development, and the production of highly intelligent goods in the military complex in order to enable the armed forces to meet modern challenges and have advanced systems, so that our ability to work with the latter, instead of our generals' current position of preparing for outmoded warfare, is not lost by the time it can be used.

### CHIMERAS

Alas, instead of active movement towards union, beginning at least with supplies of energy resources to North America, both Russia and the USA are trying to find a separate way out by reaching agreement with China behind each other's backs. Some are stirring up its territorial appetites, while others believe they will be able to use it in their *own* opposition to Washington. At the same time both sides are missing the main thing: just as the Turks, when Byzantium and the western kingdoms were competing for their favour, did not intend to reach agreement with anyone for long, so too the Chinese today have no need to do this, since they have quite different reference points and standards. First, for the Han Chinese there exists only one type of world rulers, since they believe only they possess a divine mandate to rule over life on earth. How seriously they take their chosen status is shown by the repeated Jewish pogroms in Beijing and Shanghai in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, even though the tiny Jewish community has no influence there.

The authorities explained the wave of violence by purely ideological motives — there is only one people under Heaven that can be its representatives, and that is the Chinese. The tone of anti-Japanese statements has recently been very telling in this regard. Second, in the Celestial Empire Europeans and Americans, because of their eyes, are known as “fandzhu fandze”<sup>iii</sup>: “foreign devils”. At the same time (we should recall that concepts have a wider meaning in Chinese culture, and the mind and the heart, like the soul and the body, are indivisible), they are considered to be literally devils. Incidentally, their attitude towards Russians is no more desirable. They look at us with a mixture of admiration, envy and contempt. We have deserved the latter because

while having a strong culture, we do not seek support in it but instead we constantly violate it and refuse to find in the past reference points for urgent modernisation. While we have great sages who understand the meaning of tradition and the spiritual meaning of progress, we do not follow their advice. While having such literature and ancient art at our disposal, we have lost the knowledge they had about the qualities of time and the links between the intellect and the soul. Finally, we must recall that any Magism, including the Chinese variety, is radically hostile to any Christian culture. Third, the Chinese do not see in anyone else a sufficient understanding of perspective: if they call a programme short-term, it applies for up to 10 years, while a medium-term one is up to 25 and a long-term one from 50 years upwards, and so in the consumer economy the same indices correspond to 5, 10 and 25 years, whereas for us they are 1, 3 and 7–10 years. With such a difference in perspective, fruitful cooperation is problematic.

That is why the West's faith in the omnipotence of temporary pragmatic solutions looks naïve when dealing with China and when the consumer economy is in an unprecedentedly deep and systematic crisis. Indeed it is clear that if the advanced economies and democracies which have found themselves in a qualitatively worse position than before prove unable to take decisions which radically change the nature of capitalism, it is entirely possible that within a couple of decades the world will be led not by Washington but by Beijing, which has already seized and/or bound to itself many western markets, and the basis for compromise with which is melting away before our eyes.

Russia's hopes of appeasing the Celestial Empire through a series of local pacts are looking all the more artless. China's de facto indifference to our severe problem of terrorism should be enough on its own to convince us that an alliance with it could be strategically advantageous to us after the establishment of allied relations with the USA. It is also useful to recall that unlike our internal disagreements with the Euro-Atlantic civilisation, the history of which amounts to less than a century, and which therefore are relatively easy to overcome in a situation where we find ourselves in the same boat, to start flirting with the East is very dangerous: in our past

we have 900 years of fierce conflict with it, and it has forgotten none of it. It is impossible to understand on what the Kremlin bases its certainty that in the future the country will be guaranteed safe from any “allied” aggression from the Far East. Indeed, for the past 25 years China’s economy has been growing 6 times faster than Russia’s, and is continuing to grow. It is obvious that the logic of its development will soon require that its already creeping growth be followed by open expansion. Against this background, the surge of interest in the Russian language among Chinese students ought to be putting the army and police on their guard. But instead of this we are thoughtlessly selling them modern weapons, reassuring ourselves with the idea that only “frost-resistant” people can live east of the Urals, forgetting that east of the River Amur is precisely where several hundred million inhabitants of the northern provinces live.

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When we start to take our responsibility seriously, in the European model, i.e. when we immerse ourselves in truly patriotic work, the country will become an attractive place to live, to work and to cooperate. There is nothing unrealistic, in particular, in welcoming migrants from the West for Russian language teaching and to live in free territories where there is infrastructure and citizens that meet the minimum standards they are accustomed to, which will be an important element of the democratic growth the nation needs.

For this, what we need to do is not to pursue total supremacy over the advanced economies but to understand that our speciality is unique knowledge and exclusive products without which large-scale demand cannot be created, and to concentrate on universal education, science, culture and medicine. If South Korea can find its goal in “intellect and tradition”, why can we not achieve it in “knowledge and creativity”? We possess a unique cultural resource (even when Pitirim Sorokin gave his basic diagnosis of the crisis in the western model of civilisation

he honed the key principles of social partnership and European “socialism”) which no one else is capable of achieving in the overall scheme of things. We only have to realise that culture is not a free collection of simple features but a complex system. That is how a nation preserves itself, and turns the other half of its brain to the western project. It becomes its intellectual trust and the spirit of its heart, and takes the place it deserves.

Therefore we do not need to wear sackcloth and ashes over the fact that the country has trouble producing its mass-production vehicles: on the other hand there are dozens of tuning workshops that are deluged with orders for years ahead. In the same way, in our aviation industry we are developing aerodynamics, materials and airframes and creating the ideology and requirements for avionics and engines that the Europeans and Israelis are manufacturing. We must not produce journeymen and cloud our thinking with spectres of being some policeman-like great power, but instead must revive a powerful political and civic nation that is respected for the authority of its thinking, the strength of its spirit and the morality of its argument. For the first time Russia has the chance to achieve everything, without exploiting its sense of victimhood, and by being concerned primarily for itself, to balance out the rationality of the western project and thereby to strengthen the global balance without renouncing its priorities in any way. ■

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*(Endnotes)*

<sup>i</sup> Editor note: research by the translator and editor has failed to confirm the spelling of these two names, therefore they have simply been transliterated back from the Russian

<sup>ii</sup> Editor note: this is a direct transliteration of the phrase used in the Russian text, which is itself presumably a transliteration from the Chinese. In spite of extensive research on the part of the translator and editor it has not been possible to establish the exact meaning of this phrase.

<sup>iii</sup> Editor note: this heading appears in the original text